



READER'S GUIDE

The *TriCounty Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)* is actually two plans in one document. In one case, the RMP is a revision of the *White Sands RMP* completed in 1986. A revision is essentially a complete rewrite of and replaces the existing land use plan or RMP. In the other case, the RMP is an amendment of the *Mimbres RMP* completed in 1993. An amendment changes one or more decisions in an existing land use plan in response to new issues or uses of resources. The amendment portion of the *TriCounty RMP* amends decisions pertaining only to Doña Ana County in the original *Mimbres RMP*. All other decisions will remain in force. At the conclusion of this planning process, two separate management plans and two Records of Decision will be issued -- one covering Sierra and Otero Counties and one covering Doña Ana County.

Following is a brief overview of the organization and content of this *TriCounty RMP/EIS* to aid in your review and understanding of the proposed decisions and actions. All the chapters are arranged in the same order or arrangement of the various sections.

The document begins with a **Dear Reader Letter** explaining what BLM is doing, the purpose of the document, a schedule of public meetings and a request for public comments on the RMP. This is followed by a **Table of Contents**. The Table of Contents is comprehensive and most helpful to locate discussion of particular resource programs such as land tenure, special designations, minerals management, wildlife habitat management and so forth, as well as a list of all the maps to complement the text and show geographically the proposed decisions. Next is a comprehensive **Executive Summary** of the document. After that is the main text of the document as described below.

VOLUME I

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 identifies the purpose and need for the RMP, defines the Planning Area and Decision Area, and explains the public participation process. This chapter identifies the planning criteria used as guidelines influencing all aspects of the planning process. These guidelines are based on law, regulations, and policy and help to ensure that the document meets policy and regulatory requirements and provides adequate management direction for future users. Also included in this chapter is a description of the involvement of the State, local, and other Federal agencies and various American Indian Tribes. A list of the cooperating agencies participating in the planning process as well as a description of their roles is included here as well. The issues developed through internal and public scoping are listed along with management considerations for resolving resource conflicts addressed in the RMP.

CHAPTER 2 ALTERNATIVES

Chapter 2 presents the various strategies for achieving the management goals and objectives of the various resources and resource uses in the Decision Area and to resolve the issues and management concerns identified in Chapter 1. The alternatives described in Chapter 2 are the essence of the RMP and around which the entire document is constructed. The RMP provides management guidance for the BLM-administered land in the three-county area for up to 20 years. However, the long-term vision for accomplishing objectives may be much greater than that and may not be completely achieved under any alternative during the life of these two plans.

The chapter begins with a brief description of the theme of each alternative. Four alternatives are identified, characterized by different intensities of use and management direction to achieve the desired range of conditions. A section describing alternatives considered but eliminated from further analysis in the document. A No Action Alternative is included as required by law and regulation and to form a baseline comparison for impact analysis. The chapter provides a detailed description of the decisions and actions proposed under each alternative and for each resource and resource use. Each alternative would meet the management goals and objectives; however, the means for meeting each goal, the rate at which they would be met, and the impacts to resources may differ among the alternatives.

CHAPTER 3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Chapter 3 contains an overview of the *Planning and Decision Areas* and briefly describes both the physical environment and management situation for each of the resources and resource uses. The chapter describes the living and non-living components of the environment that may be affected by the management prescriptions of the alternatives. Other components of the environment that may not be affected by the proposals are described in order to portray a complete picture of the *Planning Area*. Current management direction is briefly described for each resource and resource use.

CHAPTER 4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Chapter 4 contains the analysis of impacts or environmental consequences of the various actions proposed under the alternatives in Chapter 2. Impacts result from the changes to the physical environment and existing conditions described in Chapter 3 as a result of implementing the management strategies of the alternatives described in Chapter 2. Several general analytical assumptions which apply to all alternatives are discussed at the beginning of the chapter as well as at the beginning of the discussion of some of the resources and uses. These are intended to help the reader understand how the writer arrived at his or her conclusions regarding impacts.

CHAPTER 5 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Chapter 5 contains a summary of key events of the consultation and coordination process prior to and during preparation of the Draft RMP/EIS. It lists those agencies, organizations, and individuals who were contacted and provided comments and information for the document. It summarizes Public Scoping at the beginning of the process, and lists and describes all public meetings held during the planning process.

Cooperating agencies are also listed along with their role in the preparation of the document. Also listed are the contractor personnel who prepared the Draft RMP/EIS and the BLM interdisciplinary team members who worked on the project.

GLOSSARY AND REFERENCES

These sections contain the glossary with definitions of the terms and technical language used in the text; and the bibliography of the references cited in the document to assist the reader in the review process.

MAPS AND ACREAGES

All acres for geographical designations or references and all polygons such as areas of critical environmental concern, disposal parcels, visual resource management classes, and so forth are calculated based on the most up-to-date field information available and using current BLM Geographic Information System technology. In all cases, acreages are approximate and may change as better information becomes available or technology changes. Consequently, no warranty is made as to the accuracy of the data contained herein and is for use for gross analysis only.

Likewise, the maps contained in the document depicting the various designations and management actions are for illustration purposes only and are of such a small scale that locations of boundaries or points and sizes of areas are only approximate and should not be used for any other purposes than those intended by BLM in the preparation of this document. In other words, acres, locations, specific points, boundaries, etc., are inexact in all cases and could be changed at any time as better information becomes available.

VOLUME II

APPENDICES

Volume II of the Draft RMP/EIS (CD format only) contains appendices which provide additional supporting or background information to that contained in the Volume I. The appendices contain information such of the laws, regulations and policies that are authorize the preparation of RMPs; a list and description of best management practices; livestock grazing allotment statistics; designated routes in Wilderness Study Areas and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern; and the lands and mineral disposal policy; and other supporting information.